

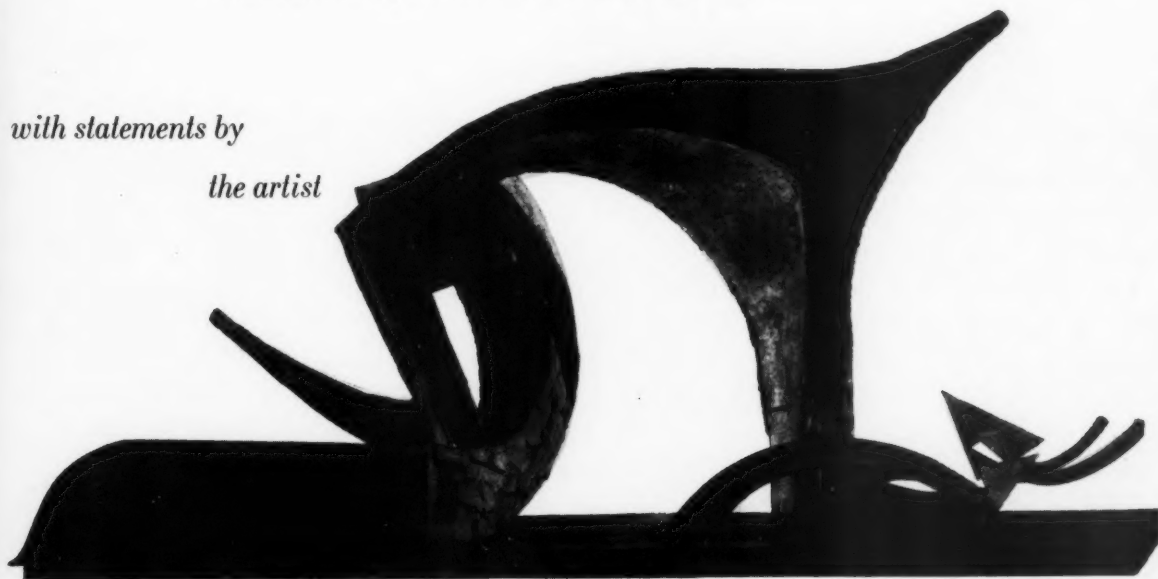


JULIO GONZALEZ

introduction by Andrew Carnduff Ritchie

with statements by

the artist



The Museum of Modern Art New York

in collaboration with The Minneapolis Institute of Arts

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Overleaf: *Reclining Figure*, 1934. See p.30



Picasso. *PORTRAIT OF JULIO GONZALEZ*. c. 1900-04. Watercolor, $12\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris

acknowledgments

This is the first retrospective exhibition in the United States of the sculpture of Julio Gonzalez. The present monograph is the first in English on the artist.

On behalf of the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art and The Minneapolis Institute of Arts I wish to thank the following for their assistance: the collectors and museums whose generosity in lending has made the exhibition possible and whose names appear on page 46; Robert Giron, W. H. B. Sandberg, Jean Cassou, Henri Marceau; Miss Darthea Speyer for securing information for me in Paris; Mrs. B. Proske for locating articles on Gonzalez; Miss Mary S. Coxe for research, translation of Gonzalez' statements and secretarial work throughout; and Mrs. Nancy Riegen for preparing the bibliography.

Above all I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Mme Roberta Gonzalez, daughter of the artist, who has lent a majority of the sculptures and drawings in the exhibition and who has been a principal source of information for the facts about her father's life and work.

ANDREW CARNDUFF RITCHIE, *Director of the Exhibition*

exhibition dates

The Museum of Modern Art: February 7 — April 8, 1956

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts: May 8 — June 17, 1956

introduction

George Orwell in his *Homage to Catalonia* writes movingly of the generosity of the Spaniard and particularly of the Catalanian. "If you ask him for a cigarette," Orwell says, "he will force the whole packet upon you. And beyond this there is generosity in a deeper sense, a real largeness of spirit, which I have met with again and again in the most unpromising circumstances." At the same time Orwell comments upon the well-known indecisiveness, the procrastinating habits of the Spaniard. "In theory," he says, "I rather admire the Spaniards for not sharing our Northern time-neurosis; but unfortunately I share it myself."

One wonders whether an elastic time sense is not somehow related to largeness of spirit. In any case, I am reminded of these Spanish characteristics when thinking of the Catalanian, Julio Gonzalez, who did not find his real role as a sculptor until after he was fifty, but when he did find his way the spirit and grace of his conceptions became quickly manifest.

Since the Middle Ages there have been few sculptors in Spain of international importance. Even such Renaissance masters as Beruguete and Diego de Siloé were heavily in debt to Italian teaching or example. But while Spanish sculpture for many centuries seldom rose above a provincial level, there is one related art in which the Spaniard has always excelled. The Moorish occupation of over eight hundred years left as one of its principal contributions a knowledge and love of decorative metal work, particularly in wrought iron. Much of the magnificence of Spain's church interiors is due to the extraordinary richness and beauty of metal grills, screens and candelabras. It is this tradition which is Gonzalez' inheritance.

Born in Barcelona in 1876, he came from a large artist-family, one principally engaged in the making of decorative metal work—lamps, lanterns, candelabras, floral ornaments in bronze, gilded and nicked, and in forged and beaten iron. The master craftsman of the workshop was the father Concordio, who was also a sculptor. His sons, Joan and Julio, and his daughters, Pilar and Dolores, all assisted him and eventually exhibited their metal work under his or their own names in the Barcelona Expositions of 1892 (when Julio is said to have won a gold medal), 1894, 1896 and 1898. In 1893 Joan and Julio also exhibited work in the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In the 1896 catalog of the Barcelona Exposition Julio's entry was a "Branch of flowers of forged and beaten iron," which may be taken as typical of his early work.

At some time between 1891 and 1900, Julio is also said to have



Concordio Gonzalez. PORTRAIT OF HIS WIFE PILAR. c. 1875. Plaster. Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

Top: CONCORDIO GONZALEZ, father of the artist, c. 1893.

done some work, along with many other Barcelona artists, on Antonio Gaudí's enormous and fantastic church, the Sagrada Familia, which then began building and was never completed. Whether one can claim any direct influence of Gaudí on the young metal worker it is hard to say. It may well be that the extraordinary fantasy of Gaudí's vegetable-like decorations, the perforated ornamentation of, for example, the spires and finials of the Sagrada Familia, left an impression on young Julio which bore similar fruit in the constructions in space of his maturity.*

Barcelona in the 1890s was the industrial, intellectual and artistic center of Spain. Probably in reaction to the cultural ferment of these years and also to the dominant position of father Concordio in the family workshop, Joan and Julio sought to elevate themselves from their craft status by studying in the evenings at the Barcelona School of Fine Arts. Julio was particularly attracted to painting, as was Joan. In Barcelona Joan became a friend of Picasso, who although younger than either of the Gonzalez brothers had already in the late '90s begun to make himself known as a painter. Perhaps following Picasso's example, and that of a number of young Barcelona artists, the two brothers went to Paris about 1900. There Joan renewed his acquaintance with Picasso and introduced him to Julio. The brothers also associated themselves with his friends, the poet Max Jacob, the critic Maurice Raynal, the sculptor Manolo and presumably other members of the Spanish colony, such as the sculptor Pablo Gargallo and the painter Zuloaga.

Julio was an extremely shy and retiring individual. As a consequence, he depended a great deal on the companionship of his more outgoing older brother. And when Joan died in 1908, Julio was inconsolable for many months. He gave up working for a time and abandoned all his friends, with the exception of Picasso and Brancusi, whom he had also come to know.

Previous to Joan's death, Julio had concentrated on painting, which shows the alternating influence of Puvis de Chavannes and Degas. After 1908, when he had recovered somewhat from the loss of his brother, he seems to have painted less and returned instead to metal work, mostly portrait masks and heads, hammered in bronze and silver. But what can only be described as a profound melancholia continued to affect him for many years. "Now began for my father," his daughter Roberta has said, "those long years of study, in a solitude that always increased. These eighteen years from 1908 to 1926 were without doubt the most dramatic of his

* Gonzalez' work for Gaudí is recalled by José de Creeft, the Spanish-American sculptor, who knew Gonzalez.



JOAN GONZALEZ, c.1895.

life up to that time. Practical difficulties, mental anguish, above all artistic anguish, the bitter fight with himself over the search for his true personality, were certainly the most depressing things he had to overcome. It was only towards his fiftieth year that Gonzalez, at last, foresaw dimly his true path.”*

His “true path” proved to be sculpture. During all the years of indecision he appears not to have been willing to admit finally that as a painter he was not particularly gifted and that his unique strength lay in his ability to cut and shape all kinds of metal. He had now only sixteen more years to live and his last two years, from 1940 to 1942, were interrupted by the crisis of war and he was forced to leave a number of sculptures unfinished. In effect, then, his major production as an artist was accomplished in about fourteen years. While he was not prolific, the range and increasing intensity of his work, in such a short time, are remarkable.

From about 1926 to 1930 his sculpture is quite diverse in character and usually on a small scale. Some of the pieces are cubistic, in a decorative sense, for example, *The Couple*, page 9. More ambitious are the *Harlequin* of 1929, page 10, which may owe something to Lipchitz’ “transparencies” of 1926 and later, and the *Don Quixote*, page 10, which is reminiscent of Gargallo’s mannered cubism of this time. In the late ’20s also he continued to make masks (page 12), some frankly Negro in origin, one purporting to be Japanese, others cubist, and a series of reclining heads, continuing into the ’30s (pages 13-15), whose prototype is Brancusi’s *Sleeping Muse* of 1909-10. Side by side with these more “modern” experiments Gonzalez executed a series of small figures and masks which in their flat, curvilinear decorativeness can perhaps best be described as *art nouveau moderne* with a cubist accent (page 11).

About 1931 a profound change takes place. The previous few years, one feels, were halting and uncertain in their stylistic waywardness. From 1931 to about 1936 Gonzalez’ sculpture becomes increasingly linear and near-abstract, always, however, with reference to the human figure. Surely there can be only one explanation for this new direction—Picasso. Between 1930 and 1932 Gonzalez assisted Picasso in the making of a number of iron constructions. From this collaboration one can only conclude that the greatest inventor of imagery in the twentieth century transmitted a new vision to his old friend and technical advisor. Nevertheless, I think it is indisputable that certain of these Picasso constructions bear the stamp of more than the technical hand of Gonzalez. Some have

* From a radio talk, Paris, November, 1950.



THE FOOT BATH. c.1900-05. Oil on cardboard, 16½ x 12¼". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

Joan Gonzalez. *CATALONIAN LANDSCAPE.* c.1900. Gouache. Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



a surface finish and elegance of contour, a lyrical decorativeness, that one associates with Gonzalez. Others have a rude, amateur-blacksmith look that better expresses the primitive, fetish-like imagery of Picasso.*

When one turns to Gonzalez' own constructions of the early '30s the lightness and elegance of his drawings in space are clearly distinguishable from the baroque exuberance of Picasso's line and forms. Gonzalez has said: "To project and design in space with the help of new methods, to utilize this space, and to construct with it, as though one were dealing with a newly acquired material—that is all I attempt." (See bibl. 5) Beginning with *The Dream*, page 16, of 1931 (which may still owe something to Picasso), he seeks obviously by increasingly abstract means to purify and thus to clarify his spatial concepts. *The Woman Combing Her Hair* of 1931 (page 17), *the Woman with a Basket* (page 18), a large and a small *Standing Figure* (page 19), and *Maternity* (page 21) are major steps in this development, where space itself becomes a positive medium of expression. The subtle play of angle and curve is the abstract definition of concrete space. All four of these constructions have an almost classic serenity in their linear balance and poised grace. In other constructions of the early '30s, *The Prayer*, *Dancer with Dishveled Hair*, *The Angel* and *Dancer called "à la Palette,"* pages 20, 22, 23, there is an added note of gaiety that reveals an important facet of Gonzalez' otherwise shy, retiring nature.

Together with these primarily linear constructions Gonzalez also made a number in welded sheet iron in which, by an interplay of angular or circular shapes, he cuts and circumscribes space in most complex ways (*Head called "the Swiss Woman,"* page 24, and *Head called "the Big Trumpet,"* page 25). What intricate and often humorous variations he plays upon this head theme! And in still another set of variations he explores the relationships of cylinder, cone and triangle with witty results (*Face called "the Tunnel,"* *The Lovers*, and two simply titled *Head*, pages 26-27).

About 1934 (if the present dating of his work is approximately accurate) Gonzalez begins to extend further the spatial complexity of his sculpture by employing three-dimensional forms as a foil to the rod and thin sheet elements of the earlier constructions. The beginnings of this new approach can be seen in the *Figure called "the Giraffe,"* page 28, where the body of the animal has been filled in with a mass of iron scraps loosely welded together, leaving open-



JULIO GONZALEZ, c.1912-14.

JULIO GONZALEZ, 1937.



* See D. H. Kahnweiler: *Les Sculptures de Picasso*, pl. 15 and compare pls. 27, 28 with 29, 30.

ings for light to penetrate. In the *Head*, page 29, a similar semi-transparent circular mass of fragments is set off against a tubular, crescent-shaped form which terminates in a linear stylization of hair and teeth. In the *Head with a Mirror*, page 29, the neck and mirror are solid pyramidal and disk forms and the head and hair are again linear and space-defining accompaniments.

The next stage of this play of mass, line and space combines hollow volumes of sheet iron with plate and rod shapes. In these particular constructions, I think, Gonzalez reached the peak of his formal and spatial invention. The sinuous, melodic *Reclining Figure* (page 30), the small *Elongated Figure* (page 30), the more severely abstract variants of *Seated Woman* (pages 32-33), the integration of angular and curved motifs in the *Woman with a Mirror* (page 34) and the counterpoint of line and mass in the *Woman Combing Her Hair* (page 35), all remind one of Gonzalez' passion for music. Beethoven and Mozart he loved, and above all Palestrina and Vittoria. He collected many music scores and sang and accompanied himself on the mandolin. Perhaps Gonzalez' constructions in iron are related in an intimate way to the curving shapes and hollow construction of the violin, the guitar and the mandolin (abstractions themselves of the human body). Even the patina of the metal reminds one of the polished texture of stringed instruments, long handled and rubbed.

While Gonzalez continued to produce near-abstract sculpture until the end of the '30s when he did his grimly humorous *Cactus Man I* and *Cactus Man II*, both on page 37, he never gave up working in a naturalistic manner. Witness his *Head of the Little Montserrat*, the small silver *Standing Peasant Woman*, the *Little Egyptian Torso* and the larger *Torso*, page 38. All of these relatively small pieces are in a way preparations for one of Gonzalez' masterworks—the life-size figure of *The Montserrat*, 1936-37, page 39. Named after the holy mountain of Catalonia, this peasant woman with a sickle in her hand and a child on her arm, Egyptian in formal simplicity, Gothic in sentiment, is Gonzalez' answer, as was Picasso's *Guernica*, to the desperate agonies of the Spanish civil war. Both were exhibited in the Spanish Pavilion of the 1937 Paris Exposition. In *The Montserrat* all the prettiness of the earlier *Head of the Little Montserrat* is gone and in its place there is a heroic quality of feeling—violence under restraint. The *Mask of the Crying Montserrat*, page 40, also of 1936, is more obviously tragic in expression, reminding one a little of the head of Rude's *La Marseillaise* on the Arc de Triomphe. Gonzalez' mask has none of the fantastic distortions of the crying heads in Picasso's *Guernica*



WOMAN, CHILD, THE SEA. c.1900-05. Oil on cardboard, 21¼ x 15⅝". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

Below: INCLINED ANCIENT HEAD. 1910-14. Bronze, 10⅝". Collection Hans Harlung, Paris.



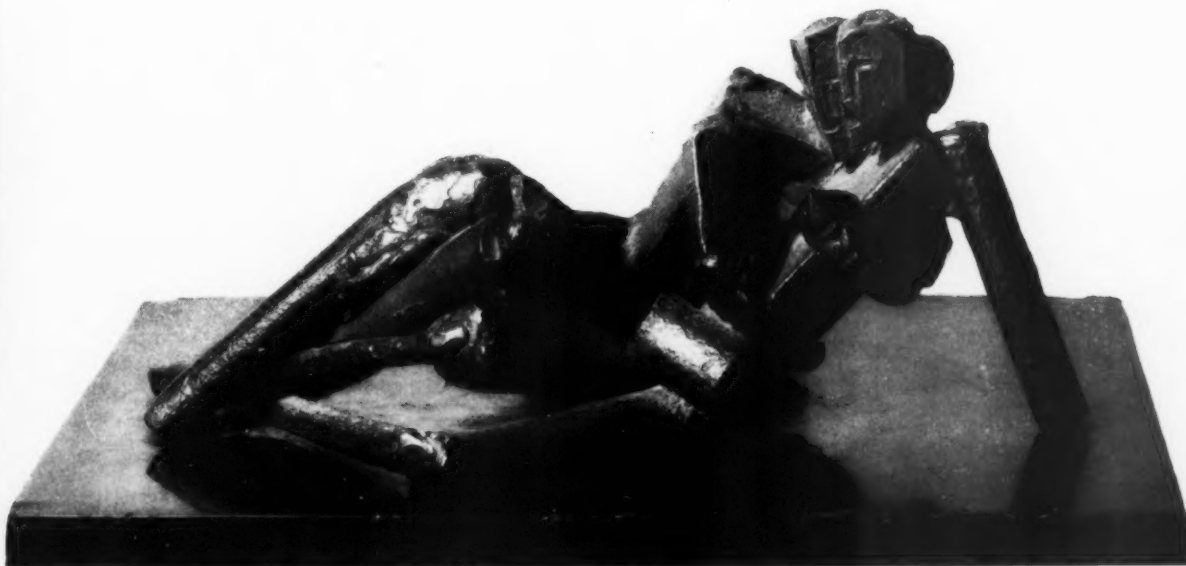
although they must be considered together as symbols of the pain and anguish of war. And it is actually to this same symbol that Gonzalez returns at the end of his life, during the opening years of World War II. By then, however, for want of oxygen and acetylene he could no longer weld his favorite iron and had to resort to drawings or to modeling in plaster. In this medium he left an unfinished figure of a kneeling woman, screaming in agony, only the head of which, so far as I know, has been cast (*Head of the Montserrat II*, page 41). The numerous drawings of these last years are either related to this final *Montserrat*, pages 40-41, or represent a prolific stream of ideas for metal constructions which Gonzalez was never to execute, pages 42-44.

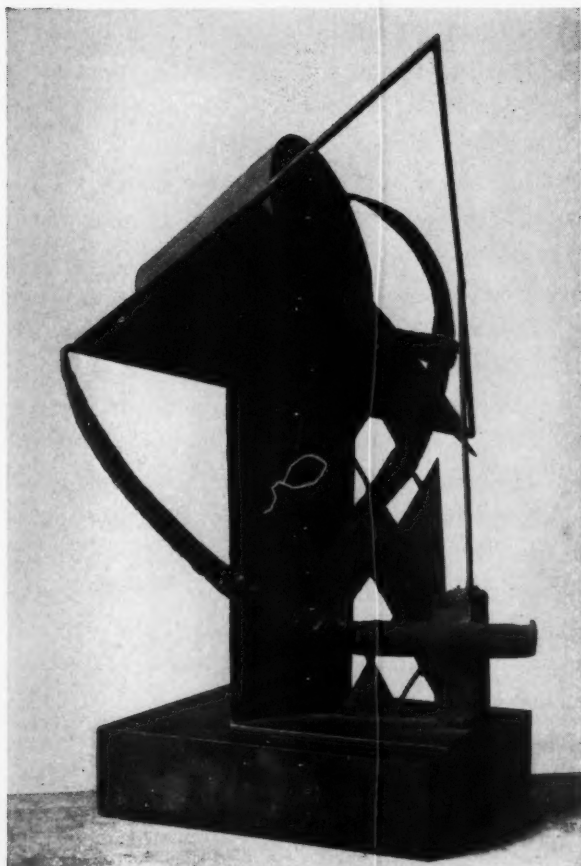
One cannot begin to estimate the influence of his space-describing metal sculpture on younger sculptors of today, both in Europe and America. The debt of such English sculptors as Butler, Chadwick and Thornton is obvious. The Italian Lardera, the German Uhlmann, the Dane Jacobsen, to mention only a few, have all looked consciously or unconsciously to him for inspiration. And in America, the preoccupation of such sculptors as Smith, Roszak, Ferber, Hare, Lippold and Lipton with welded metal as a medium and the exploitation of space as a positive attribute of their sculpture is surely the result of Gonzalez' pioneering art.

What a debt twentieth-century art owes to Spain: the protean imagination of Picasso; the refinement and intellectual probity of Gris; the humor and fantasy of Miro; the dignity, the largeness and the gentleness of spirit of Gonzalez.

A. C. R.

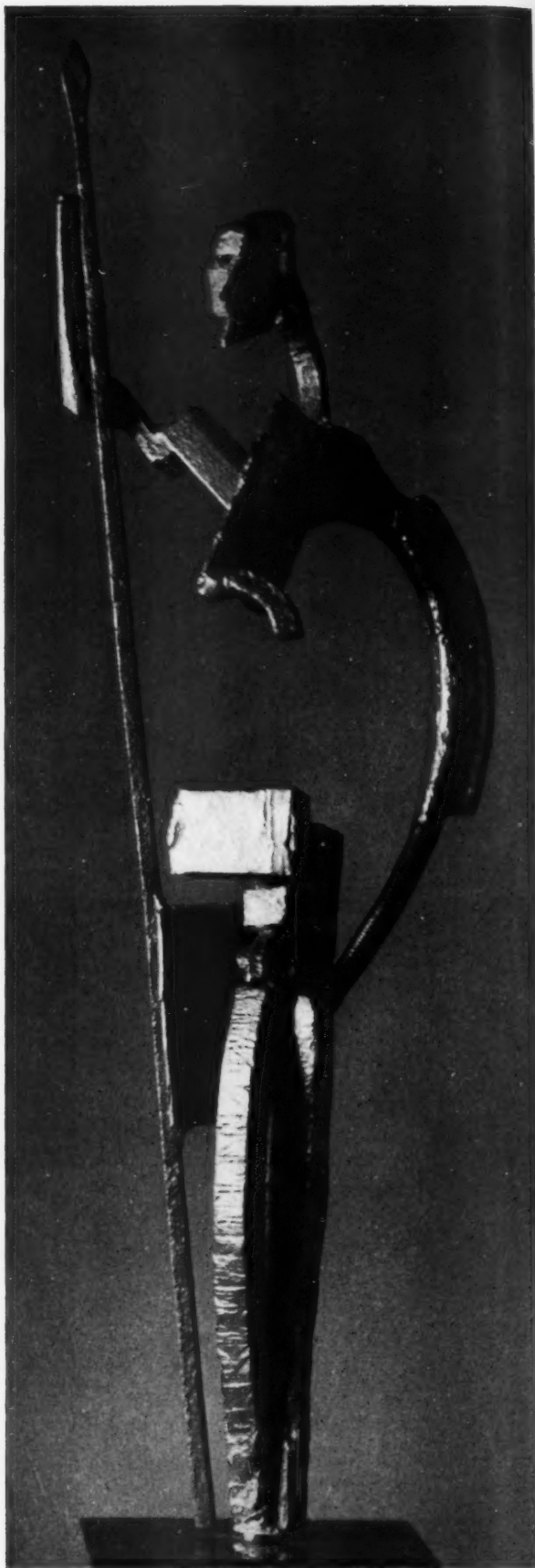
THE COUPLE. 1927-29. Iron, 3 1/8 x 7 1/2". Galerie Denise René, Paris.





HARLEQUIN. 1929. Iron, 17 1/8". Collection André Lefèvre, Paris.

Right: DON QUIXOTE. 1929. Iron, 17". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



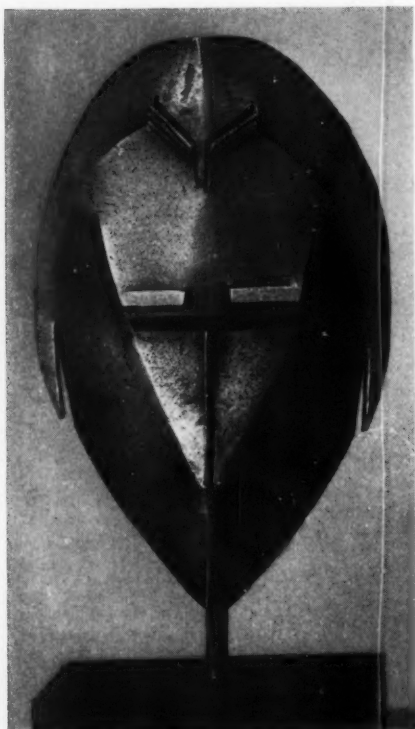


Left: TWO PEASANT WOMEN. 1929. Iron. 9 7/8". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

MASK OF PILAR "IN THE SUN." 1929. Iron, 7 1/2". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



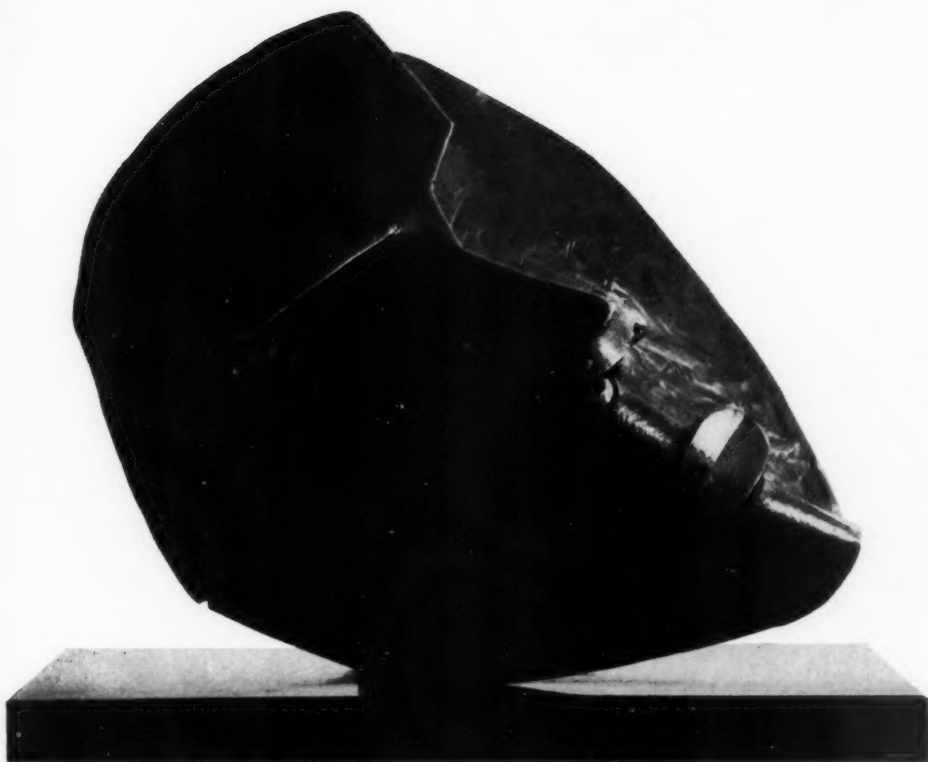
Right: JAPANESE MASK. 1928. Bronze, 7 1/8". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



HEAD. 1930. Iron, 9". Collection Mme Gonzalez-Roux, Paris.

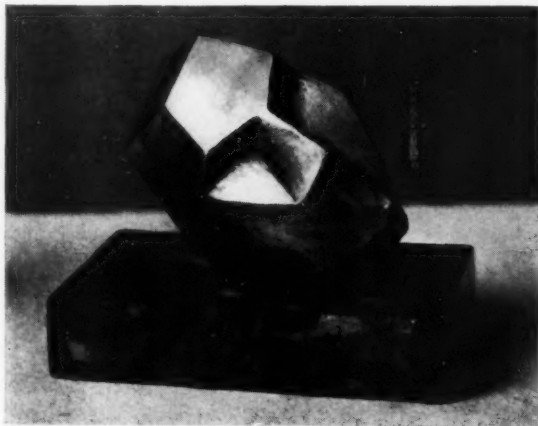
Right: HEAD CALLED "THE RABBIT." 1930. Iron, 13". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.





SPANISH MASK. 1930. Bronze, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

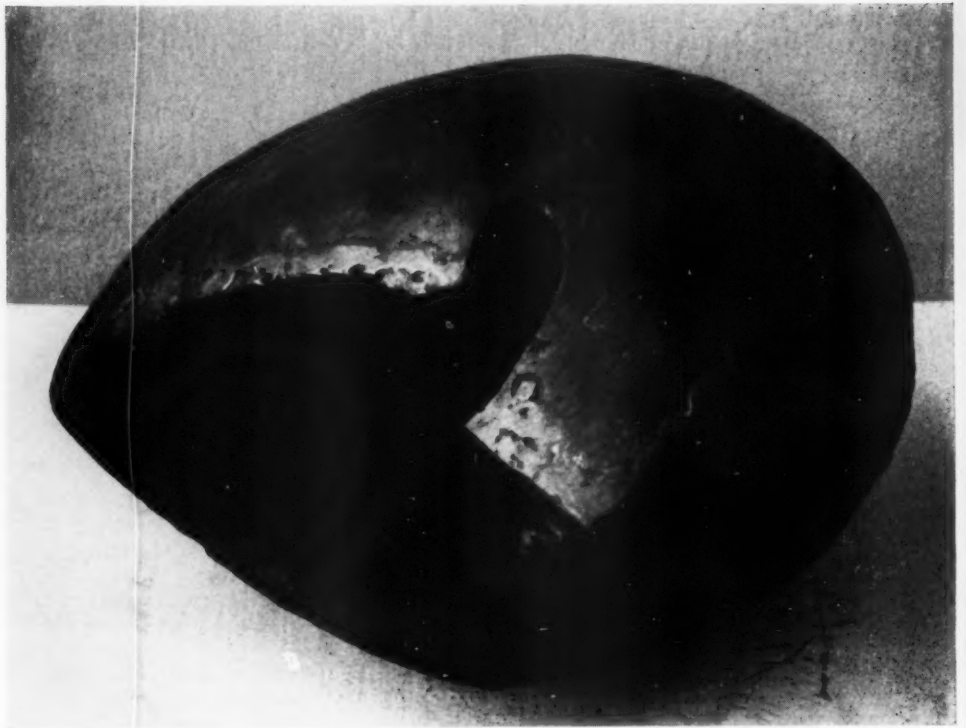
Below: LITTLE SILVER MASK. 1934, Silver, 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 3". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



RECLINING HEAD. 1929. Iron, 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Collection Alfred Richel, Paris.



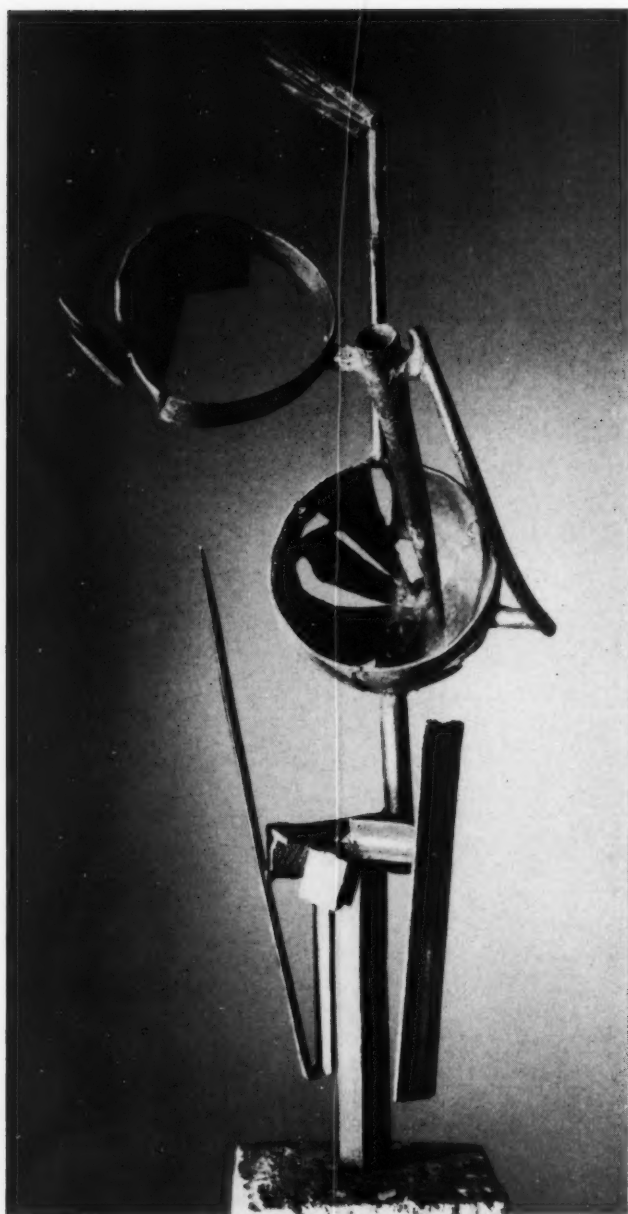
SMALL RECLINING HEAD. 1935. Bronze, 4¼". Collection Mme Berton, Paris.



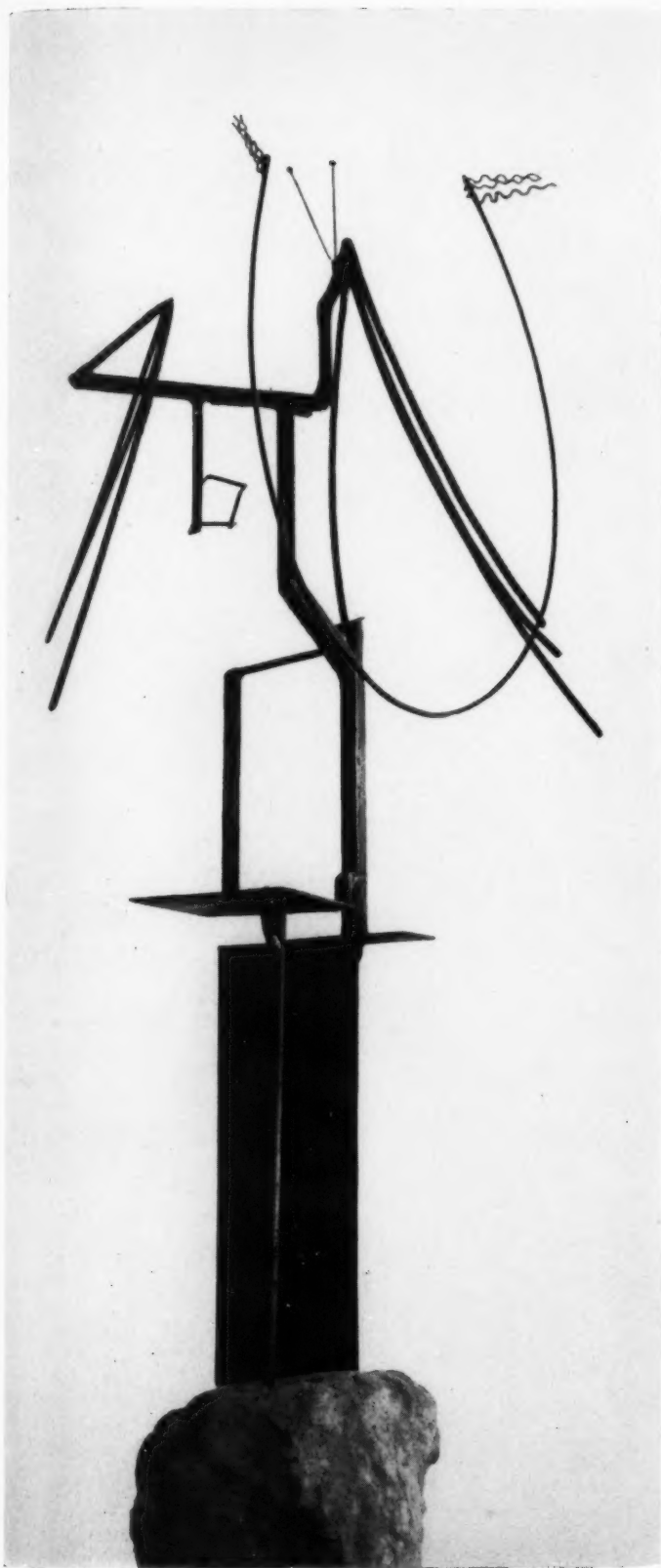
HEAD CALLED "THE CAGOULARD." 1934. Bronze, 9". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



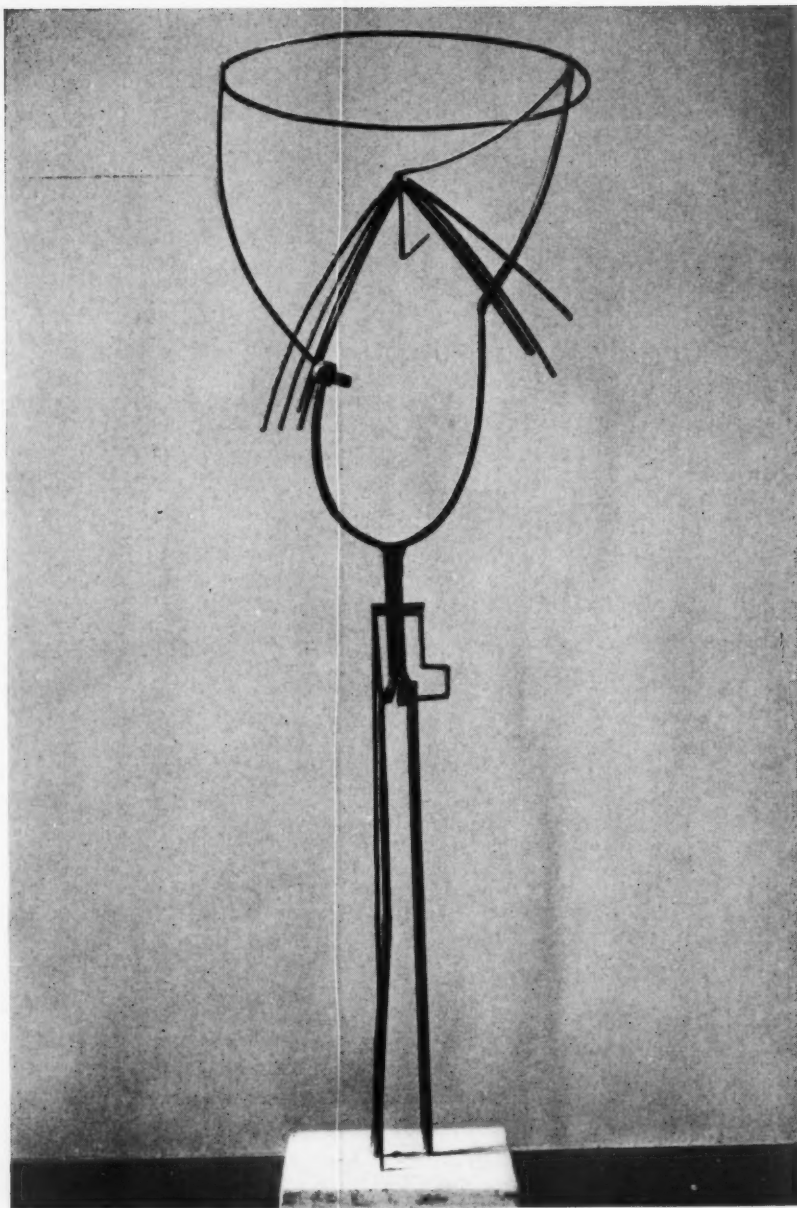
RECLINING HEAD OF A MAN. 1935. Bronze, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Berton, Paris.



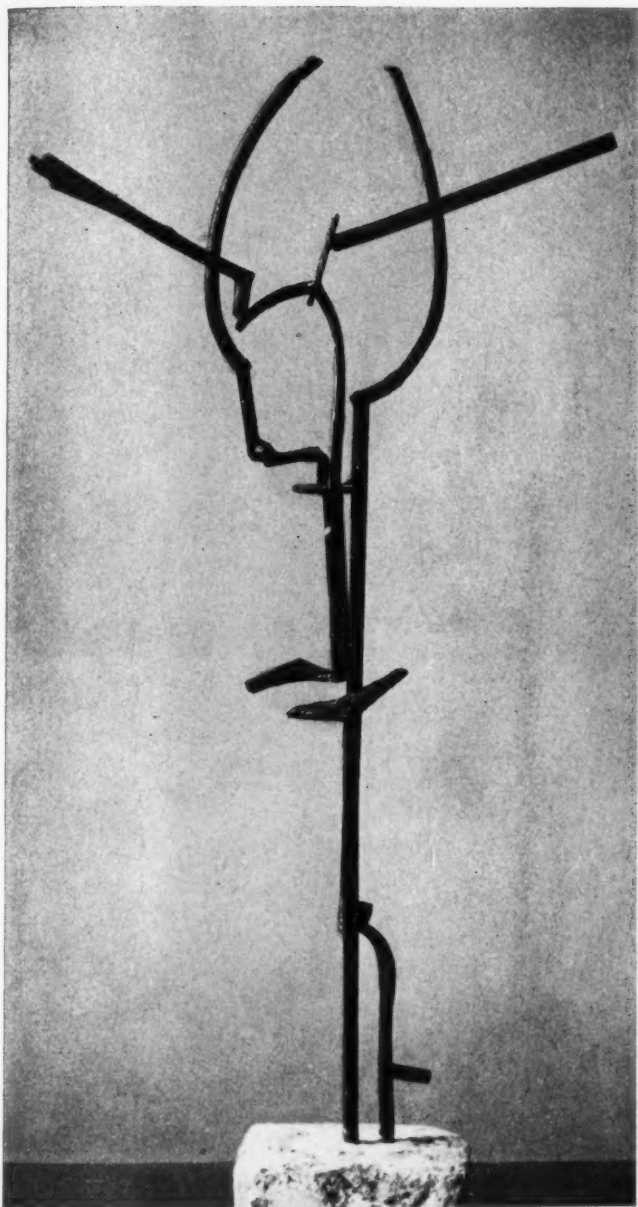
*THE DREAM. 1931. Iron, 26½".
Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez,
Paris.*



*WOMAN COMBING HER HAIR. 1931. Iron,
48". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.*

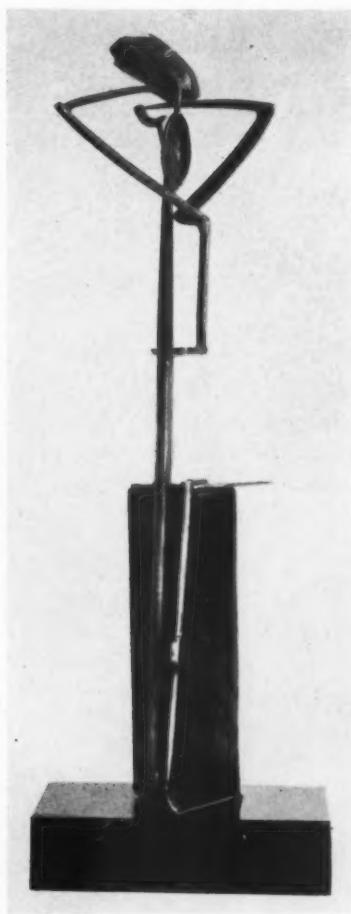


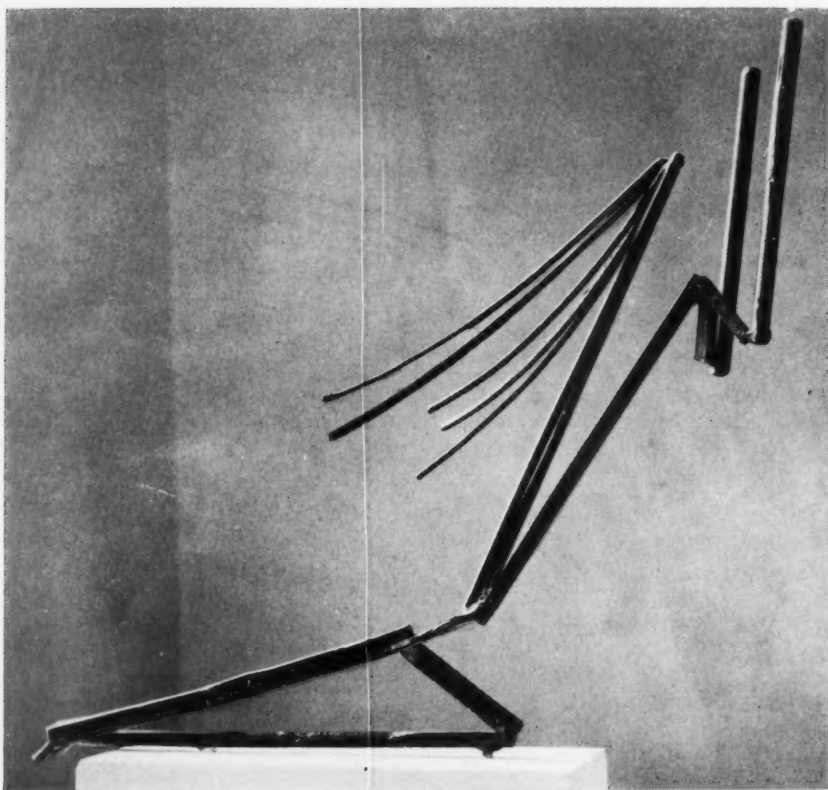
WOMAN WITH A BASKET. c.1931. Iron, 71". Collection Mme Roberta^WGonzalez, Paris.



STANDING FIGURE. 1932. Iron, 50½". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

STANDING FIGURE. 1932. Silver, 8¼". Philadelphia Museum of Art, A. E. Gallatin Collection.

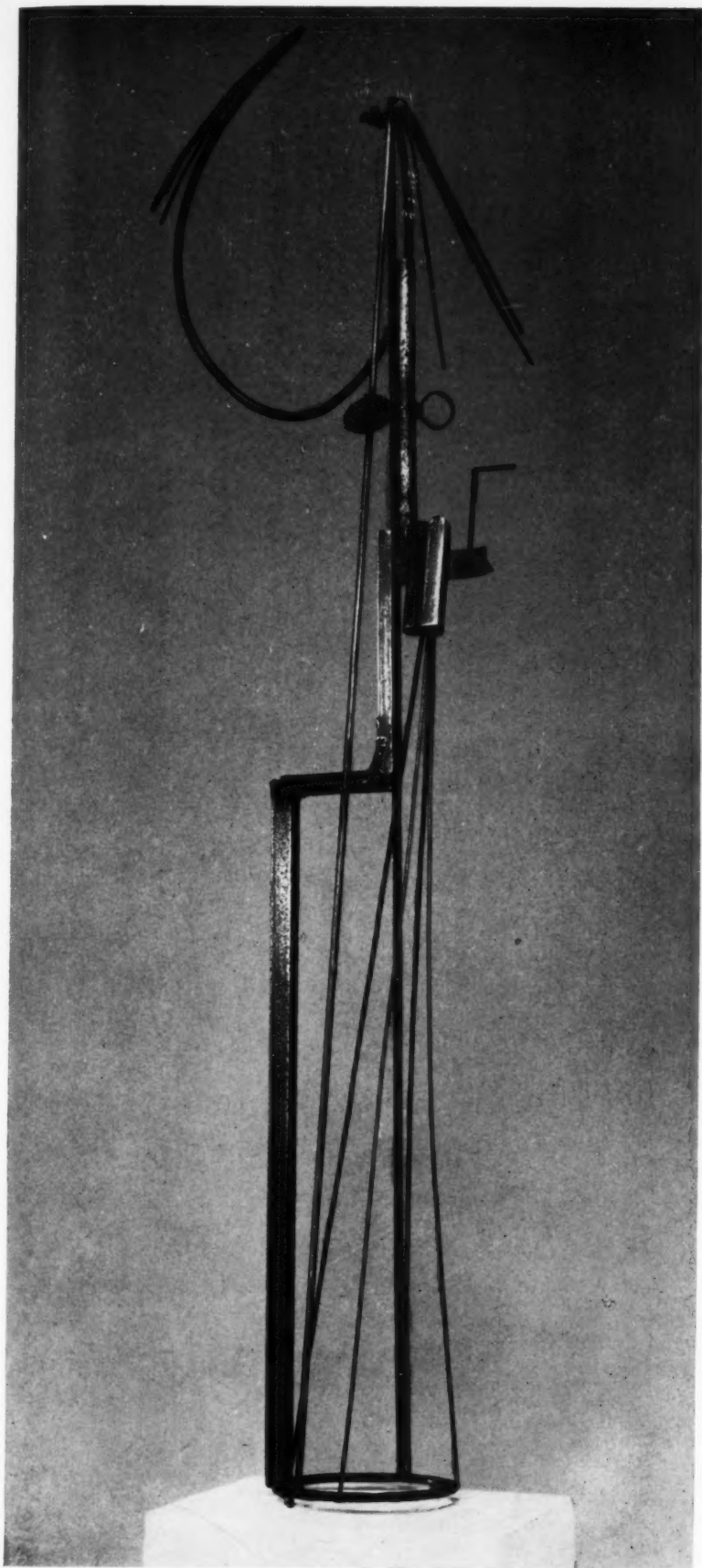




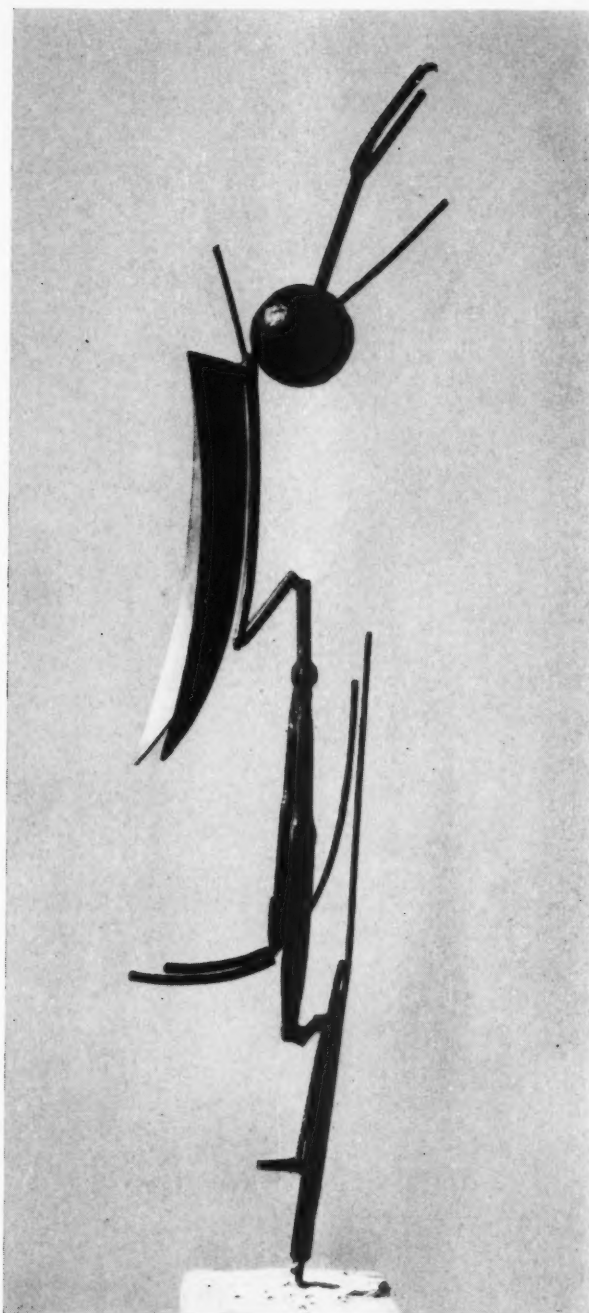
THE PRAYER. 1932. Iron, 31 x 37". Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo.

Right: DANCER WITH DISHEVELED HAIR. c.1932. Iron, 20". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

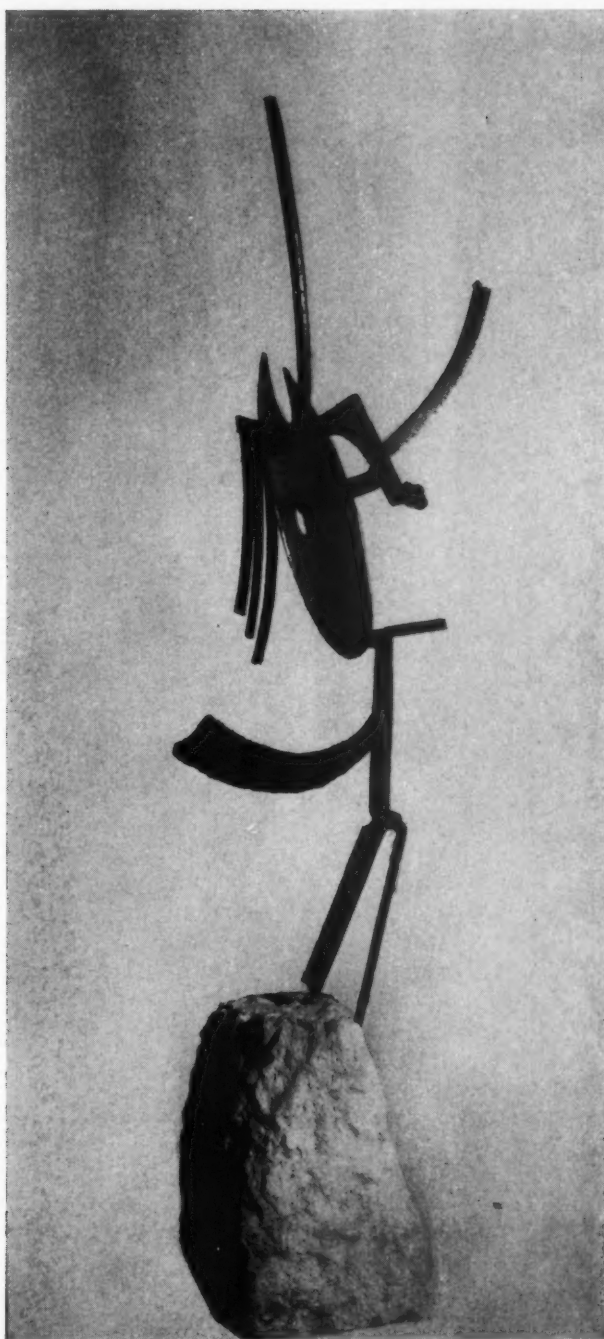




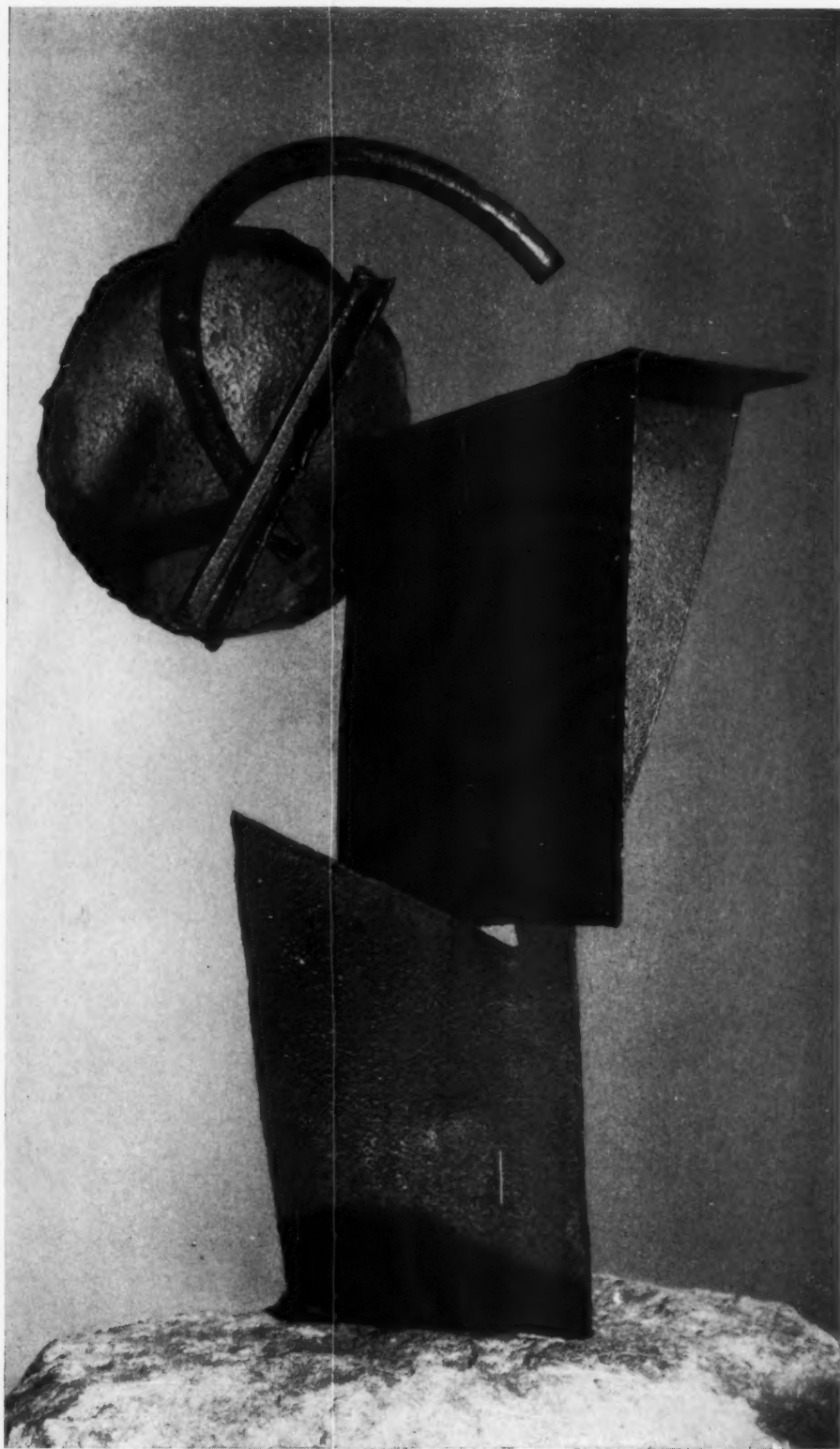
MATERNITY. 1933. Iron, 52¼". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



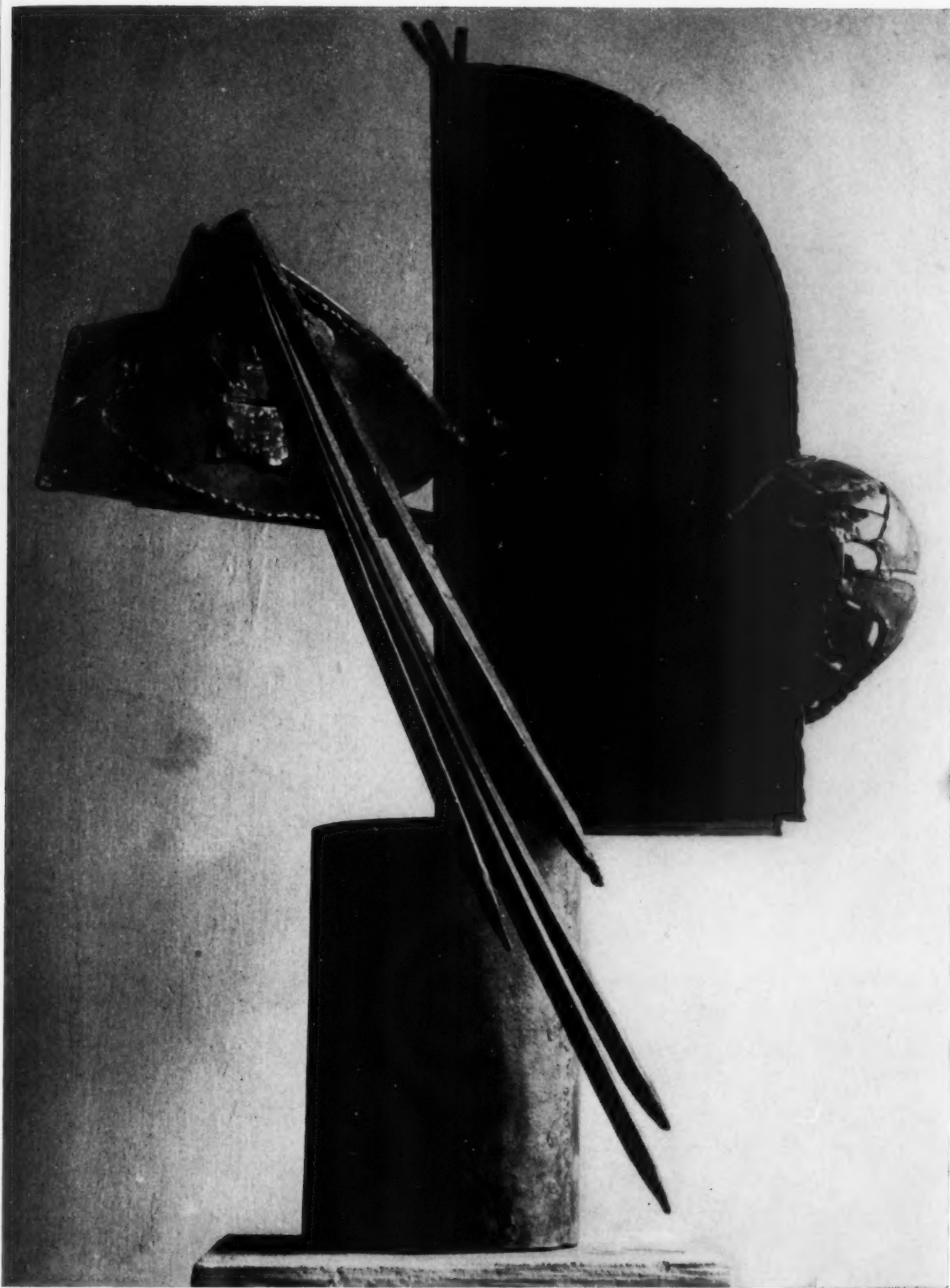
THE ANGEL. 1933. Iron, 66". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris.



*DANCER CALLED "À LA PALETTE." 1933. Iron, 30½".
Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.*



HEAD CALLED "THE SWISS WOMAN." 1932. Iron, 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Collection Fernand C. Graindorge, Liège.

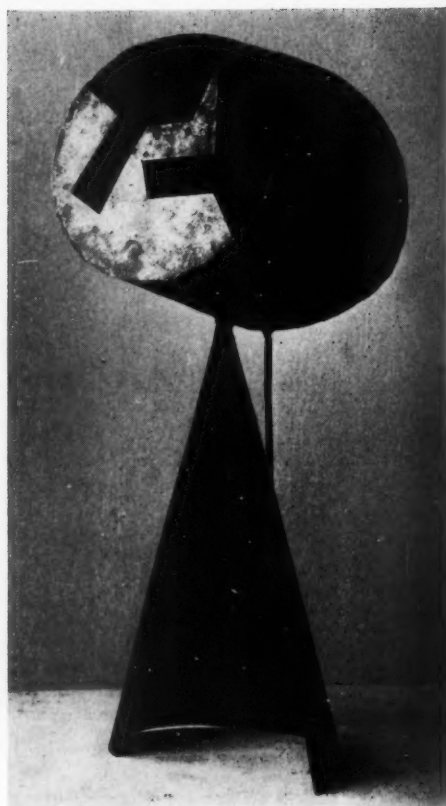


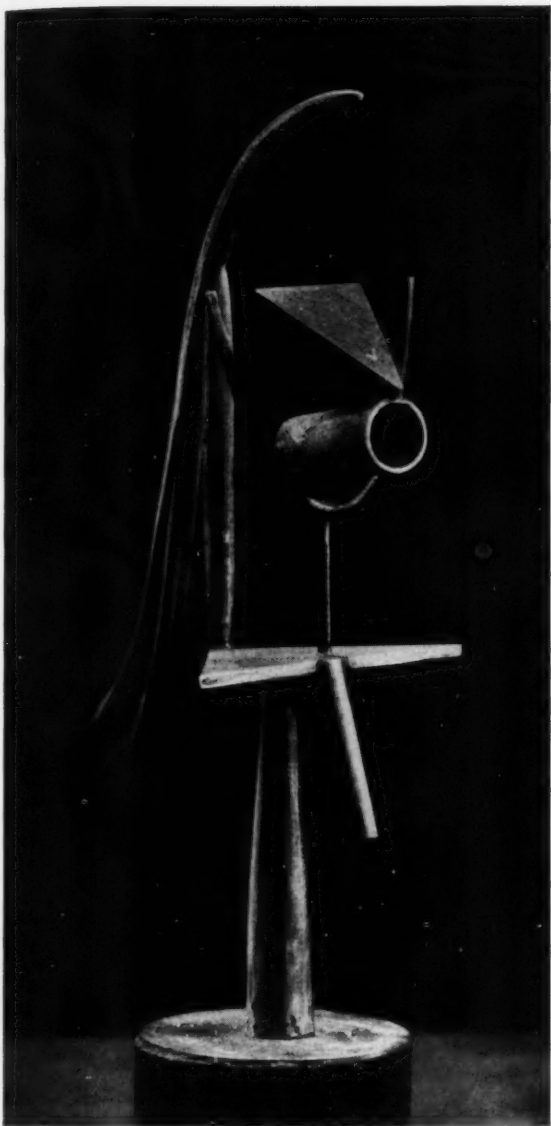
HEAD CALLED "THE BIG TRUMPET." c.1932. Iron, 38½". Collection Philippe Dotremont, Brussels-Uccle.



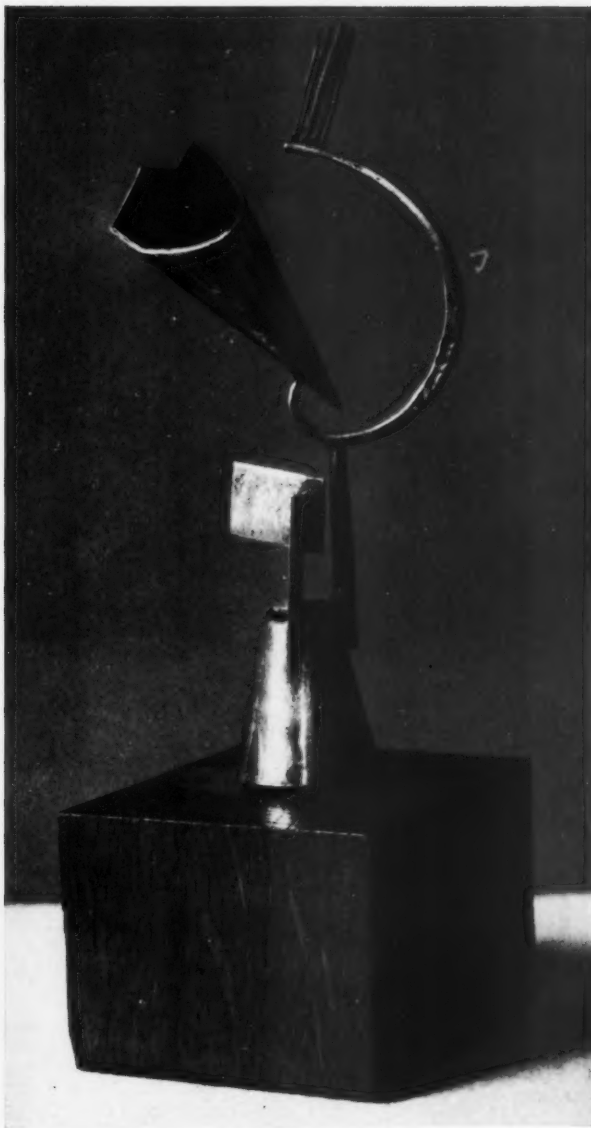
FACE CALLED "THE TUNNEL." 1933. Iron, 18½". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

Right: THE LOVERS. 1933. Iron, 17⅞". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



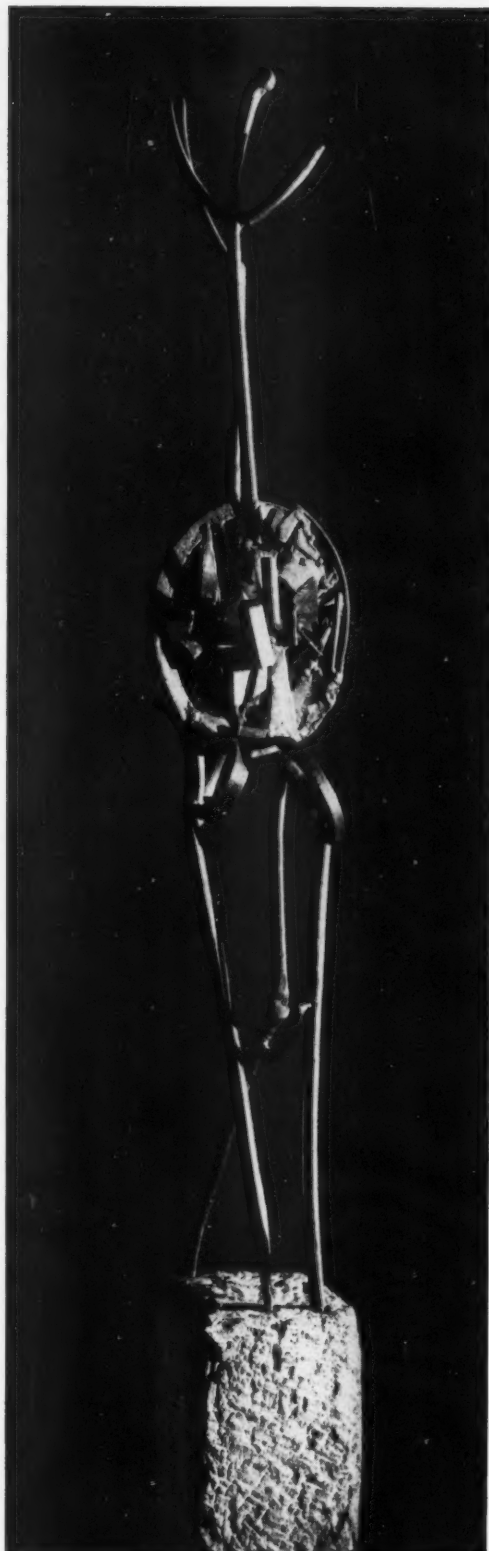


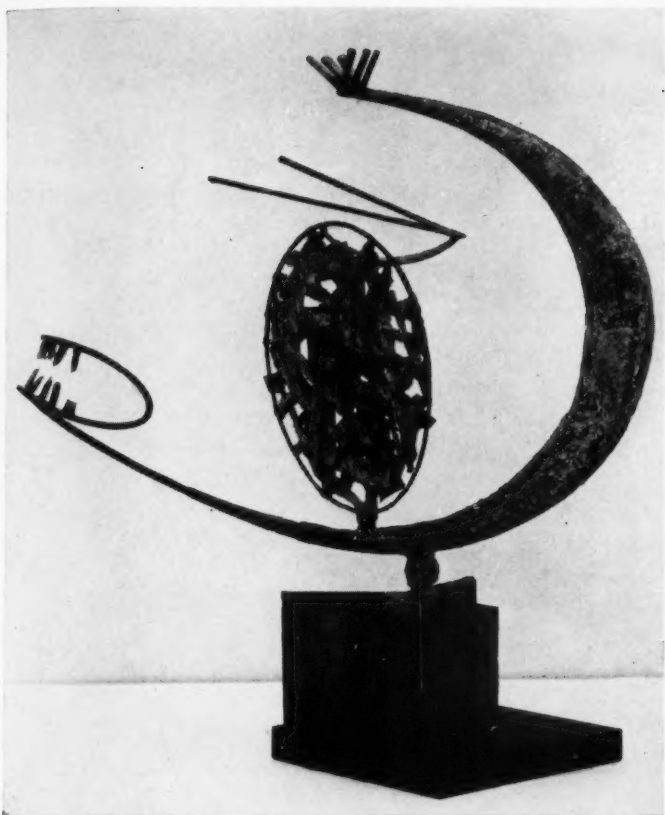
HEAD. 1933. Silver, 5½". Private Collection, New York.



HEAD. 1933. Silver, 6½". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

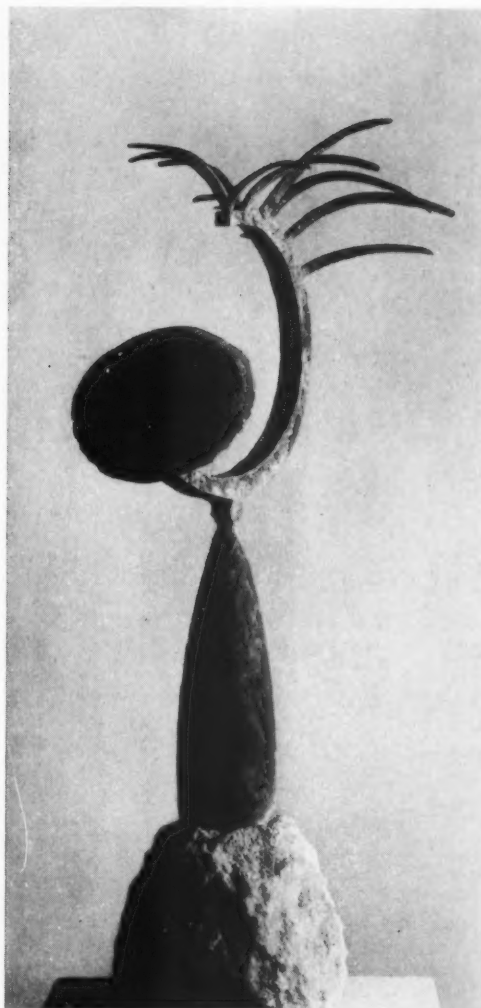
*FIGURE CALLED "THE GIRAFFE." 1934. Iron,
37½". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.*





HEAD. c.1934. Iron, 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

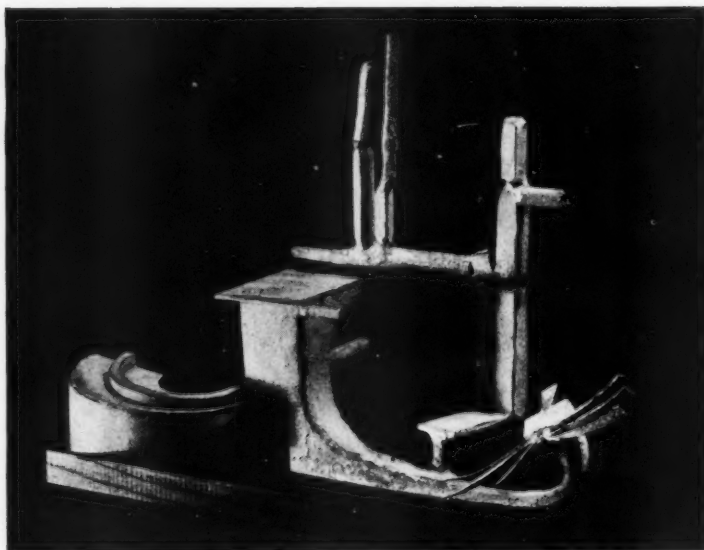
HEAD WITH A MIRROR. 1934. Bronze, 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris.





Above: RECLINING FIGURE. 1934. Iron, 17 x 37". Collection Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York.

ELONGATED FIGURE. 1935. Iron, 9 7/8". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

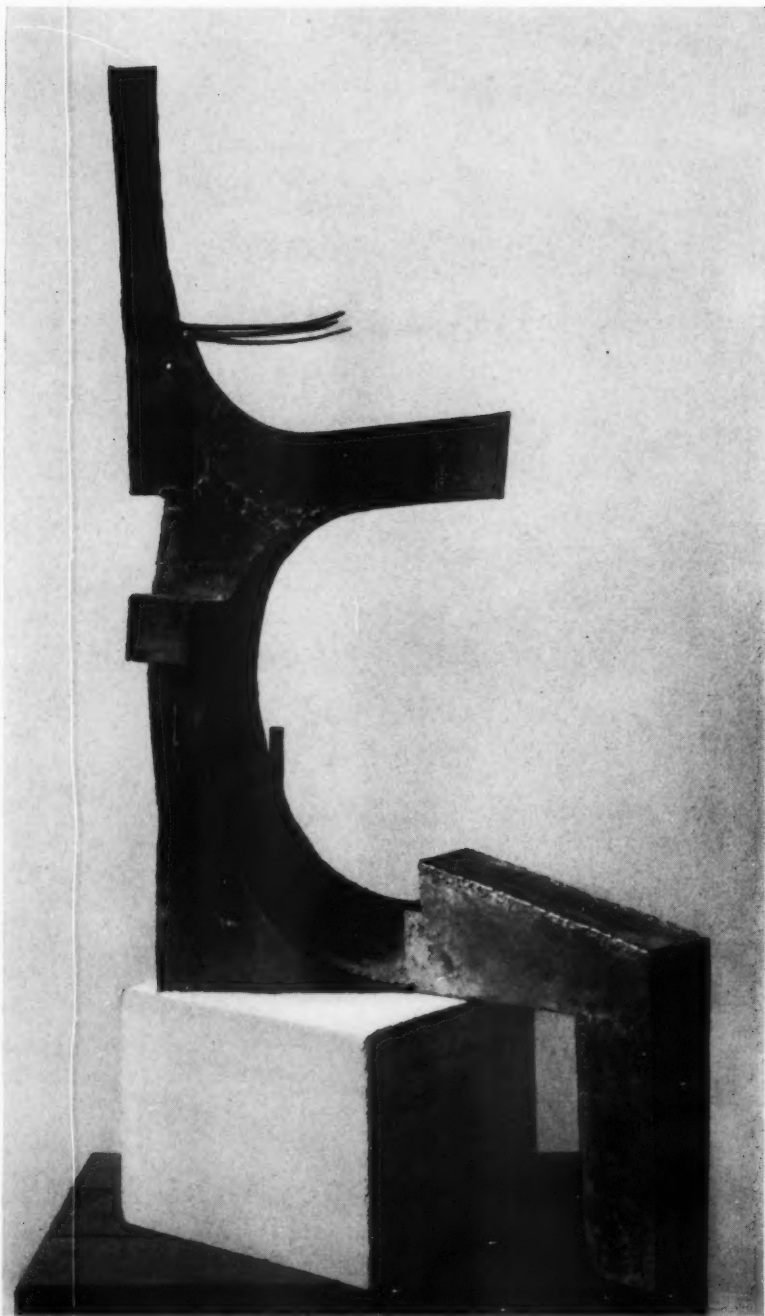




LITTLE DANCER. 1935. Iron, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



LITTLE VENUS. 1935. Iron, 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



SEATED WOMAN. 1935. Iron, 46¾". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



SEATED WOMAN. 1935. Iron, 34 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



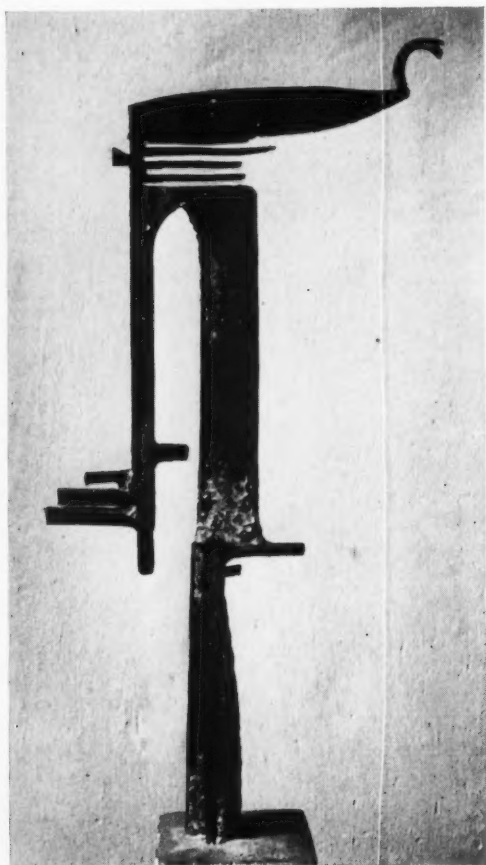
*WOMAN WITH A MIRROR. 1936.
Iron, 82". Collection Mme Roberta
Gonzalez, Paris.*



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WOMAN COMBING HER HAIR.
1936. Iron, 52". The Museum of
Modern Art, New York, Mrs. Simon
Guggenheim Fund.

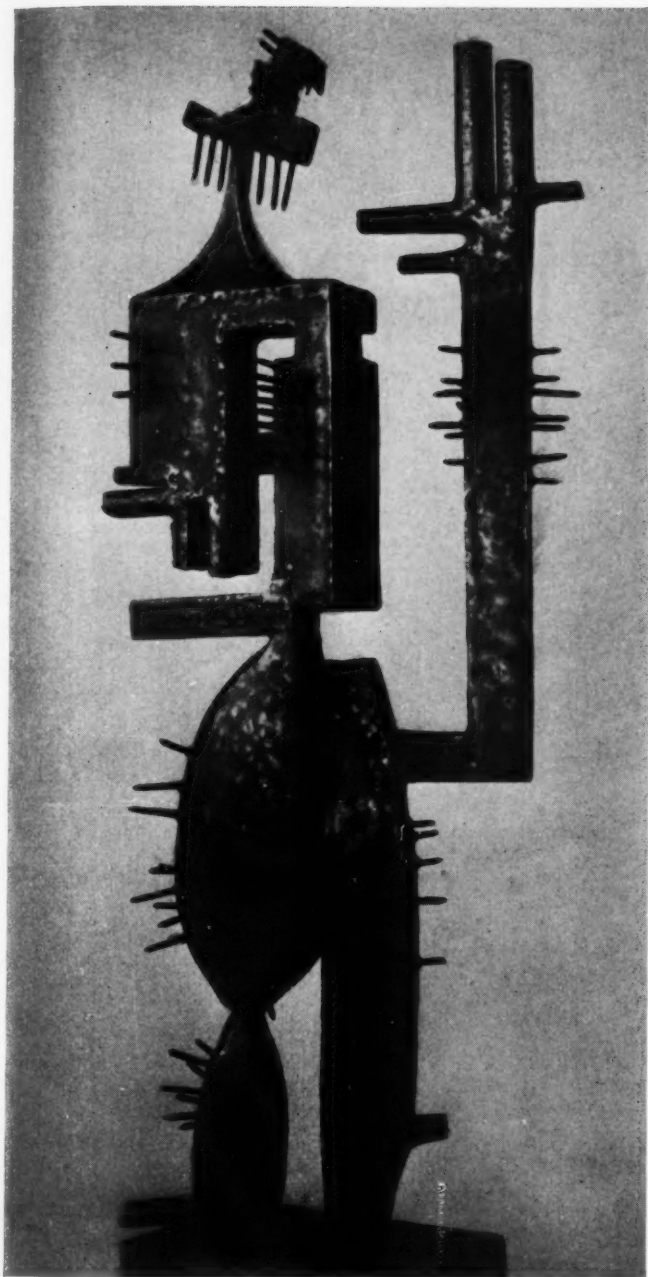
Right: DANCER CALLED "À LA MARGUERITE." 1938. Iron, 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



GOthic STANDING MAN. 1937. Iron, 20 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris.



Right: ABSTRACT FIGURE. 1942. Bronze, 13". Collection Mme Berton, Paris.



CACTUS MAN I. 1939-40. Iron, 26". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



CACTUS MAN II. 1939-40. Iron, 31½". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



HEAD OF THE LITTLE MONTSERRAT. 1932. Iron, 13". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris.



STANDING PEASANT WOMAN. 1934. Silver, 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



TORSO. c.1936. Iron, 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

Left: LITTLE EGYPTIAN TORSO. 1934. Iron, 10". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



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THE MONTSERRAT. 1936-37. Iron, 65". Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



MASK OF THE CRYING MONTSERRAT. 1936. Bronze, 12". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

Right: ANXIOUS MOTHER. 1941. Pen and wash, 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 4". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

CRYING HEAD. 1940. Pen and wash, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.





*STUDY FOR THE MONTSERRAT
II. 1941. Ink and charcoal, 6 x 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ ".
Private Collection, New York.*

*Below: HEAD OF THE MONTSER-
RAT II. 1942. Bronze, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Col-
lection Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zadok,
Milwaukee.*



The age of iron began many centuries ago by producing very beautiful objects, unfortunately for a large part, arms. Today, it provides as well, bridges and railroads. It is time this metal ceased to be a murderer and the simple instrument of a super-mechanical science. Today the door is wide open for this material to be, at last, forged and hammered by the peaceful hands of an artist.

Only a cathedral spire can show us a point in the sky where our soul is suspended!

In the disquietude of the night the stars seem to show to us points of hope in the sky; this immobile spire also indicates to us an endless number of them. It is these points in the infinite which are precursors of the new art: *'To draw in space.'*

The important problem to solve here is not only to wish to make a work which is harmonious and perfectly balanced—No! But to get this result by the marriage of *material* and *space*. By the union of real forms with imaginary forms, obtained and suggested by established points, or by perforation—and, according to the natural law of love, to mingle them and make them inseparable, one from another, as are the body and the spirit. See bibl. 37.

To project and design in space with the help of new methods, to utilize this space, and to construct with it, as though one were dealing with a newly acquired material—that is all I attempt.

The synthetic deformities of material forms, of color, of light; the perforations, the absence of compact planes, give the work a mysterious, fantastic, indeed diabolical aspect. The artist, in the very process of transposing the forms of nature, in breathing new life into them, collaborates at the same time with the space which ennobles them. See bibl. 5



FIGURE WITH A CUP. 1941. Crayon and wash, $8\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Roberla Gonzalez, Paris.

reply to a question on contemporary art

The masses attach themselves to that art which responds to their needs.

Those of the Middle Ages saw cathedrals, those of our day see collectivist constructions embellished with decorations of an abstract tendency.

The true artists are of their time. It cannot be otherwise since, if it is true that the age creates its artists, it is because the artists have determined the age.

Spiritually, el Greco was of his time and of his country. Did his era understand him? Why did he sink into oblivion over the centuries? And why did he reappear in France as the most modern master, of the purest plasticity, of our school of painting?

In his Ninth Symphony, Beethoven wanted to create music for all. Did he succeed? Does the public love this music more than the other symphonies? Does the public understand it better than the Fifth, which was not created for it?

Did not Beethoven himself, in the finale of his Ninth, lose some of his genius because of having tried to bend it to popular taste?

Why demand everything of the artist? Why not also demand of the spectators that each one, according to his capabilities, try to elevate himself to the work of art? If they don't succeed at the first try, let them persist, even several times. I have often done this.

If one generation has not completely succeeded in its efforts, the following generation may succeed.

Whether the public understands or not, the artist must surrender nothing to the public. Besides, why must one understand? Does one understand nature? Nevertheless, the masses often fall in admiration before it.

The pretty in art produces the trinket.

If one makes out a program for oneself or allows a program to be imposed, the spirit is no longer kept alert. *See bibl. 1.*

picasso as sculptor

It gives me great pleasure to speak of Picasso as a sculptor. I have always considered him a "man of form," because by nature he has the spirit of form. Form is in his early paintings and in his most recent.

In 1908, at the time of his first cubist paintings, Picasso gave us form not as a silhouette, not as a projection of the object, but by



L'ELAN. 1941. Pen and wash, 14½ x 11". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



ABSTRACT FIGURE. 1941. Watercolor and crayon, 10¼ x 7". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.

putting planes, syntheses, and the cube of these in relief, as in a "construction."

With these paintings, Picasso told me, it is only necessary to cut them out—the colors are only the indications of different perspectives, of planes inclined from one side or the other—then assemble them according to the indications given by the color, in order to find oneself in the presence of a "Sculpture." The vanished painting would hardly be missed. He was so convinced of it that he executed several sculptures with perfect success.

Picasso must have felt himself to be of a true sculptor's temperament, because in recalling this period of his life to me, he said: "I have never been so content" or "I was so happy."

Later, in 1931, at the time when he was working on the sculpture—*Monument to Apollinaire*—, I often heard him repeat "I feel myself once more as happy as I was in 1908."

I have observed many times that there is no form which leaves him indifferent. He looks at everything, on all sides, because all forms represent something to him; and he sees everything as sculpture.

Again, recently, having gathered some sticks of white wood in his studio, he carved the beautiful sculptures published here with his little pen-knife (retaining the planes and dimensions of each piece, each one of them suggesting a different figure to him), which will undoubtedly arouse a great deal of interest.

To my mind, the mysterious side, the nerve center, so to speak, of the work of Picasso, is in his formal power. It is this power which has caused so much talk of his work, which has gained so much glory for him. See *bibl. 3*.

FIGURE OF TERROR II. 1941. Pen and wash, 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris.



*Pen
Mme*

brief chronology

- 1876 *Born September 21 in Barcelona. Father a goldsmith and sculptor, from whom Gonzalez learns the craft of metal work.*
- 1892-98 *Exhibits metal work in the Barcelona International Expositions, and in the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. Studies painting evenings in the Barcelona School of Fine Arts.*
- 1900 *About this date moves with his artist brother Joan to Paris where he meets Picasso, who becomes his lifelong friend.
Devotes himself chiefly to painting.*
- 1908 *Death of his brother Joan. His loss deeply felt; Gonzalez isolates himself from most of his friends, except Picasso and Brancusi. Unable to work for a long period.*
- 1910 *Resumes work and makes a tentative return to sculpture. For many years hereafter he suffers from self-doubt, uncertain whether to continue as a painter or as a sculptor.*
- 1926 *About this year his decision made to concentrate on sculpture.*
- 1930-32 *Gives Picasso technical assistance on welded iron constructions. At this time his own maturity as a sculptor is reached. Much of his sculpture takes on a near-abstract quality. Becomes a member of constructivist group Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square), organized in 1930 by the Uruguayan painter Juan Torrès-Garcia, who had gone to Barcelona at 17 and later settled in Paris.*
- 1931 *Exhibits Galerie "le Centaure," Brussels.*
- 1934 *Exhibits Galerie Percier, Paris. Associates with Abstraction-Création group.*
- 1935 *Exhibits Galerie "Cahiers d'Art," Paris.*
- 1937 *The Montserrat exhibited Spanish Pavilion, Paris Exposition.*
- 1940 *Forced to abandon welded metal sculpture because of war-induced shortage of oxygen and acetylene.
Turns instead to drawings and modeling in plaster.*
- 1942 *Begins a second Montserrat in plaster, representing a kneeling, screaming woman, a second response to the agonies of war. This sculpture left unfinished, the head only having been cast in bronze. Dies March 27 at 8 rue R.S. Barboux, Arcueil, a suburb of Paris, where he lived and had his studio.*

catalog of the exhibition

Lenders to the Exhibition

Mme Berton, Paris; Philippe Dotremont, Brussels-Uccle; Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Paris; Mme Gonzalez-Roux, Paris; Fernand C. Graindorge, Liège; Hans Hartung, Paris; André Lefèvre, Paris; Alberto Magnelli, Paris; Alfred Richet, Paris; Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zadok, Milwaukee.

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Galerie Denise René, Paris.

Unless otherwise indicated, all works are lent from the collection of the sculptor's daughter, Mme Roberta Gonzalez, Arcueil, Paris. Most of the dates given for the sculptures are approximate and have been supplied largely by Mme Gonzalez.

Catalog

In dimensions height precedes width.

- 1 *Inclined Ancient Head*. 1910-14. Bronze, 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris. Ill. p. 8
- 2 *The Couple*. 1927-29. Iron, 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Galerie Denise René, Paris. Ill. p. 9
- 3 *Still Life*. 1929. Iron, 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Collection Alberto Magnelli, Paris.
- 4 *Harlequin*. 1929. Iron, 17 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Collection André Lefèvre, Paris. Ill. p. 10
- 5 *Don Quixote*. 1929. Iron, 17". Ill. p. 10
- 6 *Japanese Mask*. 1928. Bronze, 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 12
- 7 *Reclining Head*. 1929. Iron, 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Collection Alfred Richet, Paris. Ill. p. 13
- 8 *Mask of Pilar "in the Sun."* 1929. Iron, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Ill. p. 11
- 9 *Two Peasant Women*. 1929. Iron, 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 11
- 10 *Head*. 1930. Iron, 9". Collection Mme Gonzalez-Roux, Paris. Ill. p. 12
- 11 *Head called "the Rabbit."* 1930. Iron, 13". Ill. p. 12
- 12 *Head*. c.1930. Iron, 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris.
- 13 *Spanish Mask*. 1930. Bronze, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Ill. p. 13
- 14 *The Dream*. 1931. Iron, 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Ill. p. 16
- 15 *Woman Combing Her Hair*. 1931. Iron, 48". Ill. p. 17
- 16 *Woman with a Basket*. c.1931. Iron, 71". Ill. p. 18
- 17 *Standing Figure*. 1932. Iron, 50 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Ill. p. 19
- 18 *The Prayer*. 1932. Iron, 31 x 37". Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo. Ill. p. 20 (Exhibited in New York only.)
- 19 *Dancer with Disheveled Hair*. c.1932. Iron, 20". Ill. p. 20
- 20 *Standing Figure*. 1932. Silver, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Philadelphia Museum of Art, A. E. Gallatin Collection. Ill. p. 19
- 21 *Head of the Little Montserrat*. 1932. Iron, 13". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris. Ill. p. 38
- 22 *Head called "the Swiss Woman."* 1932. Iron, 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Collection Fernand C. Graindorge, Liège. Ill. p. 24
- 23 *Head called "the Big Trumpet."* c.1932. Iron, 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection Philippe Dotremont, Brussels-Uccle. Ill. p. 25
- 24 *Face called "the Tunnel."* 1933. Iron, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Ill. p. 26
- 25 *The Lovers*. 1933. Iron, 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 26
- 26 *Head*. 1933. Silver, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Private collection, New York. Ill. p. 27
- 27 *Head*. 1933. Silver, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Ill. p. 27
- 28 *Maternity*. 1933. Iron, 52 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Ill. p. 21
- 29 *The Angel*. 1933. Iron, 66". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris. Ill. p. 22
- 30 *Dancer called "à la Palette."* 1933. Iron, 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Ill. p. 23
- 31 *Figure called "the Giraffe."* 1934. Iron, 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Ill. p. 28
- 32 *Head*. c.1934. Iron, 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Ill. p. 29
- 33 *Head with a Mirror*. 1934. Bronze, 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris. Ill. p. 29
- 34 *Standing Peasant Woman*. 1934. Silver, 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 38 (Exhibited in New York only.)
- 35 *Little Egyptian Torso*. 1934. Iron, 10". Ill. p. 38
- 36 *Little Silver Mask*. 1934. Silver, 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 3". Ill. p. 13
- 37 *Head called "the Cagoulard."* 1934. Bronze, 9". Ill. p. 14
- 38 *Reclining Figure*. 1934. Iron, 17 x 37". Collection Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York. Ill. p. 1 and 30
- 39 *Elongated Figure*. 1935. Iron, 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 30
- 40 *Seated Woman*. 1935. Iron, 34 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Ill. p. 33
- 41 *Seated Woman*. 1935. Iron, 46 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Ill. p. 32
- 42 *Reclining Head of a Man*. 1935. Bronze, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Collection Mme Berton, Paris. Ill. p. 15
- 43 *Small Reclining Head*. 1935. Bronze, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Collection Mme Berton, Paris. Ill. p. 14
- 44 *Little Dancer*. 1935. Iron, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 31
- 45 *Little Venus*. 1935. Iron, 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 31
- 46 *Woman with a Mirror*. 1936. Iron, 82". Ill. p. 34
- 47 *Woman Combing Her Hair*. 1936. Iron, 52". The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. Ill. p. 35
- 48 *Figure called "the Big Sickie."* 1936. Bronze, 18".
- 49 *Torso*. c.1936. Iron, 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Ill. p. 38
- 50 *Mask of the Crying Montserrat*. 1936. Bronze, 12". Ill. p. 40
- 51 *The Montserrat*. 1936-37. Iron, 65". Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Ill. p. 39
- 52 *Gothic Standing Man*. 1937. Iron, 20 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Collection Hans Hartung, Paris. Ill. p. 36
- 53 *Dancer called "à la Marguerite."* 1938. Iron, 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Ill. p. 36

- 54 *Cactus Man I*. 1939-40. Iron, 26". Ill. p. 37
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 56 *Abstract Figure*. 1942. Bronze, 13". Collection Mme Berton, Paris. Ill. p. 36
 57 *Head of the Montserrat II*. 1942. Bronze, 12¼". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zadok, Milwaukee. Ill. p. 41

Paintings, Drawings, Enamels.

- 58 *Woman, Child, the Sea*. c.1900-05. Oil on cardboard, 21¼ x 15⅜". Ill. p. 8
 59 *The Foot Bath*. c.1900-05. Oil on cardboard, 16⅛ x 12¼". Ill. p. 6
 60 *Self Portrait*. 1941. Oil on plywood, 10⅜ x 6½". Collection Mme Gonzalez-Roux, Paris.
 61 *Woman on her Knees*. c.1905-08. Crayon and pastel, 11 x 14½".
 62 *Woman Washing her Arms*. c.1906-08. Watercolor and crayon, 5½ x 11".
 63 *Face of a Little Girl*. c.1912-14. Pastel, 7⅞ x 7½".
 64 *Head of a Man with a Beard*. 1936. Pen and crayon, 9½ x 6¼".
 65 *Head of a Woman*. 1936. Pen and watercolor, 8¼ x 7".
 66 *Inclined Woman's Head*. 1936. Pen and crayon, 8¼ x 6¾".
 67 *Elongated Head*. 1936. Pen and watercolor, 10⅝ x 6".
 68 *Abstract Figure with a Triangular Spot*. 1936. Wash and crayon, 7⅞ x 6".
 69 *Figure with a Horn*. 1937. Pen and crayon, 11⅜ x 7½".
 70 *Figures—Daisies*. 1938. Pen and crayon, 12¼ x 7⅞".
 71 *Cactus Man*. 1939. Pen and crayon, 10¼ x 7".
 72 *Two Peasant Women*. 1940. Pen and wash, 9½ x 6¼".
 73 *Crying Head*. 1940. Pen and wash, 12¼ x 9½". Ill. p. 40
 74 *Severe Mask*. 1940. Pen and wash, 11¾ x 9⅞".
 75 *Figure with a Cup*. 1941. Crayon and wash, 8¼ x 5⅞". Ill. p. 42
 76 *Two Figures with White Linen*. 1941. Charcoal, wash and crayon, 9⅞ x 6¼".
 77 *Anxious Mother*. 1941. Pen and wash, 8⅝ x 4". Ill. p. 40
 78 *Austere Mother*. 1941. Pen, watercolor and pencil, 7⅞ x 5⅞".
 79 *L'Elan*. 1941. Pen and wash, 14½ x 11". Ill. p. 43
 80 *The Appeal*. 1941. Pen and wash, 9½ x 12¼".
 81 *Figure of Terror I*. 1941. Pen and wash, 10⅝ x 7".
 82 *Figure of Terror II*. 1941. Pen and wash, 12⅝ x 9½". Ill. p. 44
 83 *Abstract Figure*. 1941. Watercolor and crayon, 10¼ x 7". Ill. p. 43
 84 *Figure in Magnificence*. 1941. Crayon, pen and wash, 9½ x 6¼".

- 85 *Figure, or "the Offering."* 1941. Pen and crayon, 12¼ x 9½".
 86 *Figure with a Grand Air*. 1941. Watercolor and pen, 10¼ x 7½".
 87 *Abstract*. 1941. Watercolor and pen, 9½ x 6¼".
 88 *Study for the Montserrat II*. 1941. Ink and charcoal, 6 x 7⅝". Private collection, New York. Ill. p. 41
 89 *Standing Man*. 1942. Crayon, 9⅞ x 8¼".
 90 *The Dream*. 1936. Enamel on copper, 5½ x 3⅞".
 91 *Face*. 1936. Enamel on copper, 4¾ x 3⅞".
 92 *Abstraction*. 1936. Enamel on copper, 6 x 4".
 93 *Picasso Portrait of Julio Gonzalez*. c.1900-04. Watercolor, 12⅞ x 9⅞". Ill. p. 3

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